

STRATEGY
RESEARCH
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**STRATEGY FOR COLLECTIVE SECURITY
IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE**

BY

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USAWC CLASS OF 2001

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20010622 033

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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ABSTRACT

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TITLE: STRATEGY FOR COLLECTIVE SECURITY IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 10 April 2001 PAGES: 20 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

What role should the United States military play in the Western Hemisphere during the next decade...unilateral hegemon or regional partner? "Cooperative Security" is the regional engagement strategy that will dominate the coming decade as nation states in this hemisphere, and around the world, seek to compete and prosper in the new global environment. There is little doubt that the United States will remain the world's only super power. The challenge of the future is how to empower international and regional organizations such as the United Nations, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Organization of American States (OAS), and the Regional Security System (RSS) in the Caribbean, to accept a greater role in the mitigation and resolution of crisis within their respective spheres of influence. The downsizing of the U.S. Military and the implementation of a collective security strategy for the future, further implies that alliances and conflict resolution dominated by coalition warfare, will continue to be an integral component of the National Security Strategy of the United States. Revitalizing the entire spectrum of peacetime engagement programs now with the objective of empowering regional leaders to take a greater role in regional conflict resolution is one way to begin supporting this strategy. Collective security strategy will also require the U.S. to examine the current Unified Command Plan and impose changes designed to facilitate the integration of regional partners in the resolution of future conflicts. One such change for the Western Hemisphere should be the designation of an "Americas Unified Command" replacing United States Southern Command. America's Command would encompass the entire Western Hemisphere including Canada and Mexico. The goal for these policy changes ultimately are well equipped and highly trained allies, capable of self-defense or providing military support anywhere in the hemisphere. An investment in the collective Security of the Americas now is in the National Interest of the United States.

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STRATEGY FOR COLLECTIVE SECURITY IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

What role should the United States military play in the Western Hemisphere during the next 20 years....unilateral hegemon or regional partner? The concept of "Collective Security" as a regional engagement strategy will dominate United States foreign policy initiatives not only in the Western Hemisphere but also all over the world¹. Collective Security can be defined as like-minded nations of a region providing for a stable and secure environment against common threats to political, economic, or military institutions, alliances, security relationships, regional integration and interoperability initiatives.

The National Military Strategy of the United States will always remain to fight and win America's wars, first, through deterrence and ultimately with decisive and overwhelming military force should deterrence fail. Although there is little doubt that the United States will remain the world's only super power, the probability of multiple small-scale regional conflicts/crisis is much greater than a large-scale conventional warfare here in the Western Hemisphere. It is also a safe bet that there would be no large-scale conventional threat to this hemisphere in the next 20 years. It is important to note that this projection of the future collective security environment is based on two fundamental assumptions: That the United States will remain politically and militarily engaged in the world and that it will maintain military superiority over current and potential adversaries. If the United States were to withdraw from its international commitments, ignore its diplomatic leadership or relinquish its military superiority, the world would become an even more dangerous place, and threats to the United States, our allies, and our interests would be more severe. The United States military is a military of finite resources. Although modernization will occur, the size and capability of U.S. military forces is not expected to change significantly in the next twenty years². The United States must focus now, on how to handle best these small-scale conflicts/crisis, humanitarian disasters, peacekeeping requirements and any other future regional security challenges, without having to constantly deploy U.S. Military forces and assume command responsibility for the operation.

The challenge of the future is how to empower international and regional leaders and organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the Organization of the American States (OAS), and the Regional Security System (RSS) in the Caribbean, to accept a greater role in the mitigation and resolution of crisis within their respective areas of responsibility and spheres of influence³. The ability of the United States to influence, mitigate, and help resolve crisis in the future should not be contingent on its unilateral military involvement. There simply will not be enough of it to go around⁴. This paper will describe the history of United States' policy in Latin

America, identify U.S. and Latin American interests in the hemisphere, recommend Unified Command Plan changes, describe U.S. peacetime engagement opportunities, and conclude with recommendations for future foreign policy initiatives for this hemisphere.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Since the end of the 19th Century, proximity, history and culture have linked the United States with Latin America and the Western Hemisphere. Hemispheric concerns have historically been addressed in United States National Security Strategy but are seen as having a lower priority than that given to Western Europe, the Middle East, Southwest Asia or more recently the Balkans⁵. From the Monroe Doctrine to Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy, the United States has seen the Western Hemisphere as its domain and felt compelled to intervene, at will, when military, economic, or ideological crisis threatened the stability of the region⁶.

It was 1903 when President Roosevelt sent naval war ships to prevent the landing of Colombian soldiers in Panama. A military intervention that eventually led to the completion of the Panama Canal under U.S. supervision and the recognition of a Panamanian government that annexed the Panama Canal to the United States. This was one of the earliest demonstrations of the U.S. intent to dominate the Western Hemisphere, through military force if necessary. Since that time, the U.S. has sent military forces to Nicaragua, Mexico, Haiti, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Grenada, Dominican Republic, Honduras, and Cuba⁷.

Civil-Military relations have been a dominant factor in the history of Latin America. It is important to understand the evolution of this relationship in order to capitalize on the progress that has recently been made in this area. Historically, whether a government was military or civilian, most regimes in Latin America represented a civil-military coalition of some kind. When military officers formally controlled a government, they had to seek support from a wide variety of influential groups within the country, incorporating civilians where they deemed appropriate. The presence of the military as an internal political actor in Latin America was fundamentally conditioned not by their perceptions and not by their ideological orientations. What historically made the military a pronounced political actor in Latin America was the comparative weakness of civil society. Weak civilian governments were unorganized, corrupt and often in economic and political turmoil. Latin American militaries realistically have not had a significant external threat, which encouraged an internal orientation of their forces. These forces served as the stability in an otherwise unstable environment. In fact those civilian governments that garnered the support of their nations military leadership were rarely contested. Viewed in this light the

military organizations in Latin America did not come to power of their own choosing. The military organizations in Latin America came to power because of an absence of credible leadership in the standing civilian governments. It has only been in the last 20 years that civil-military relations in Latin America have evolved to the point where civilian control of the military is readily accepted and democracies in Latin America are not merely procedural but substantive examples of representative governments.

As an emerging superpower, and with the onset of the Cold War, the United States policy was heavily influenced by the concept of containment of the Soviet Union and communist influence. The United States and the Soviet Union competed with one another over spheres of influence, but their competition nurtured some Latin American regional instabilities such as military dictators and the rise of drug cartels. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall the world has seen an end to the bi-polar competition and globalization is the promise of the future.

Latin America has experienced an unprecedented period of economic and political growth⁸. The Western Hemisphere enters the twenty-first century with every nation in the hemisphere except Cuba supporting a democratic government and committed to free market economies. Armed conflict between countries in Latin America is virtually non-existent and many historical geo-political conflicts now have negotiated solutions. Most of these nations have embraced America's core values of democratic governments, free –market economics, and respect for fundamental human rights. The people of the Americas are enjoying opportunities created by emerging markets competing in the world arena, the rise of electronic commerce, and the proliferation of democratic ideals, allowing citizens to choose more representative governments. Another positive development in this hemisphere is the sub-regional political, economic and security agreements. In North America, the Caribbean, Central America, the Andean region, and the Southern Cone, these agreements have contributed to peace and prosperity throughout the hemisphere. Lest we not forget about Mexico and Canada who now rank first and second respectively as trading partners of the United States. Further, the contributions of Venezuela as the number one oil supplier and Mexico as the number three-oil supplier to the United States⁹. There is a new climate in the Western Hemisphere. A climate of regional political and economic interdependence exists throughout the region.

Future transnational hemispheric threats will demand that regional interdependence on the military front support this new collective security challenge. With a new administration in the United States and the dawn of a new century, our focus should be on the future collective security of this hemisphere and how to posture ourselves best to support hemispheric priorities

and deter hemispheric challenges. Further, current U.S. policy must address how Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina and other regional leaders will share this regional security burden.

UNITED STATES AND HEMISPHERIC COLLECTIVE INTERESTS

The National Security of the United States is directly related to the stability of regions throughout the world. If that is true, it should then be obvious that the major focus of the National Security of the United States and the use of all of our components of international influence should be maintaining and sustaining a security strategy that is consistent with our global interests – specifically, a functional, proactive and sustainable national security strategy of peacetime engagement and regional collective security. This is particularly important to ensure future peace and stability in regions where the United States has vital or important interests¹⁰.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Henry H. Shelton recently stated that the threat to the future global security environment is changing and will present an “operational challenge” for the U.S. that could far exceed our current capabilities. He referred to this difference between potential missions and capabilities as a “strategy-force mismatch where the current strategy of the U.S. places an unsustainable burden on parts of the current force structure”. As the leader of the free world, the U.S. will remain deployed throughout for the foreseeable future. Even with this strategy-force mismatch recent operations in Southwest Asia, the Balkans, Africa, Colombia, and the Caribbean suggest that the United States will remain engaged throughout the world and not necessarily where the U.S. has identified vital national interests¹¹.

The principal security concerns/threats in the western hemisphere are transnational in nature, such as drug trafficking, organized crime, money laundering, illegal immigration, and terrorism. All of these threats, especially drug trafficking, produce adverse social effects that threaten to undermine the sovereignty, democracy and national security of nations throughout the western hemisphere¹². These security concerns/threats will not change in the foreseeable future.

The United States will always retain the capability to act unilaterally if necessary but the cost of unilateral actions on the political and diplomatic front will always be high. A strategy that emphasizes coalition operations and the use of allies to solve regional challenges is necessary to promoting the national interests of the United States in a world where nations must act in concert with others to create the preferred international conditions for prosperity and secure common regional goals. Challenges of the future will demand cooperative, multinational

approaches that distribute the burden of responsibility among like-minded states. Strengthening and adapting alliances and coalitions that serve to protect shared interests and values are the most effective ways to accomplish these ends. Similar to NATO, a long-term solution for the foreign policy strategy for the Western Hemisphere would be to empower regional political organizations for oversight of the collective security mission and encourage regional military alliances to accept a much larger role in the maintenance of regional stability¹³.

UNIFIED COMMAND PLAN CHANGES

A Unified Command is the primary organization charged with protecting America's security interests in a geographic region. It does this by managing U.S. military resources in the region and conducting peacetime engagement operations that permit interoperability and access to the region in order to further U.S. interests. Assisting America's diplomats in building coalitions, empowering allies, and maintaining alliances are thus key roles of the Unified Commands. Such a role is particularly important in regions like Latin America where U.S. military resources are limited¹⁴. U. S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) is the Unified Command with the responsibility for Central America less Mexico, the Caribbean, and South America.

USSOUTHCOM was established when Caribbean Command (CARIBCOM) was designated USSOUTHCOM in August of 1962. The name was changed to more adequately reflect the geographical responsibilities of the command and facilitate relations between Caribbean and Latin American countries. Final approval by the Secretary of Defense was given for the name change in June of 1963¹⁵.

In 1970 the existence of USSOUTHCOM) came under fire during a period where there was a move to reduce U.S. presence overseas. A study recommended the disestablishment of USSOUTHCOM and the transfer of essential missions to other unified commands. The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) did not agree and favored retention of USSOUTHCOM, believing that the benefits of "an area-oriented senior U.S. military command" in Latin America outweighed the advantage of the small reduction in U.S. military presence accomplished by the command's removal¹⁶. Cold War pressures kept USSOUTHCOM as a viable deterrence to communist influence into Latin America.

In 1980, there was a proposal by LANTCOM to move the management of all security assistance for the Caribbean from USSOUTHCOM. LANTCOM retained control of the water throughout the Caribbean and considered the islands under their control. USSOUTHCOM argued, "most of the nations in the Caribbean Basin are inseparable from Latin America due to

historical, cultural, and political ties." USSOUTHCOM was also focused entirely on the Western Hemisphere and already had programs and organizations in place to assist the Caribbean countries such as military schools in Panama, which were used by several of the Caribbean Basin countries. USSOUTHCOM had repeatedly shown its capacity to render timely disaster relief throughout the area; and a directorate within USSOUTHCOM was already dedicated to Latin American military affairs and security assistance coordination. USSOUTHCOM also argued for assignment of Mexico to their area of responsibility following the discovery of oil and the potential for Mexico to emerge as a hemispheric leader. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) agreed with USSOUTHCOM and they retained control of Security Assistance programs for the Caribbean¹⁷.

The next time there was a serious consideration to changing the Unified Command for USSOUTHCOM was in 1991 when J5 proposed establishment of an America's Command. USSOUTHCOM would have been disestablished and America's Command would be formed covering all of North and South America, except Alaska that was in the Pacific Command AOR, including the establishment of a Joint National Contingency Force. Other Unified Command Commanders argued that there was no need for the establishment of a Joint National Contingency Force when the majority of Continental United States (CONUS) based forces were obligated against existing Operational Plans and they did not want to have to coordinate with CINCAMERICA's for these forces should they be required in their respective Areas of Responsibility. CJCS General Powell rejected the establishment of the America's Command and favored retaining USSOUTHCOM¹⁸.

In 1997 the Unified Command Plan was again modified for USSOUTHCOM, transferring oversight of the Caribbean Islands including the surrounding waters to USSOUTHCOM from United States Atlantic Command.

The time has come for another the Unified Command Plan change in regards to the Western Hemisphere. There is a need for another change to the peacetime engagement plan in regards to Latin America. The current unified command structure is principally focused south of the U.S. – Mexico border reflecting historical and outdated priorities. The current USSOUTHCOM structure has achieved its mission helping Latin America transition through the Cold War into a group of democratic and regional partners. The Unified Command Plan must now be structured to address the threats of the future and not the past.

USSOUTHCOM should now be redesignated America's Command and include the United States, Canada, Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean Basin, and all of South America. America's Command would be responsible for the ocean approaches to the United

States throughout the Maritime and Air Defense Zones in addition to building cooperation among the nations of North, Central, South America and the Caribbean Islands¹⁹. A "Homeland Defense Command" would also be created as a subordinate command to America's Command for such missions as augmenting border security operations, counter drug efforts, air and missile defense, and consequence management of natural disasters and terrorist attacks within the United States²⁰. There would no requirement to realign any of the current service components from JFCOM to America's Command. Service components for USSOUTHCOM would serve as the service components of America's Command. Establishment of an Americas Command has the potential to be a catalyst in the synchronization of a peacetime engagement strategy throughout the Western Hemispheric focused on the involvement of all hemispheric leaders and countries against common threats.

PEACETIME ENGAGEMENT

Peacetime engagement programs allow U.S. Armed Forces to promote regional stability, increase the security of allies, build coalitions, and ensure a more secure global environment. The commanders-in-chiefs of our unified commands, with guidance from the National Command Authority (NCA) and CJCS, develop plans and employ forces and personnel in peacetime to protect and promote U.S. interests and regional security objectives in their respective areas of responsibility²¹. U.S. Peacetime engagement activities can be crucial to maintaining an acceptable level of interoperability with coalition partners. Dissimilar training, equipment, technology, doctrine, and language will continue to challenge coalition partners across a full range of military operations. Alliances will continue to be key because of the internal stability they foster. Department of Defense (DOD) efforts help to promote regional stability, prevent or reduce conflicts and threats, and deter aggression and coercion on a day-to-day basis all over the world. To do so, the DOD agencies employ a wide variety of means to include: Forces permanently stationed abroad; forces rotationally deployed overseas; forces deployed temporarily for exercises; combined training, or military-to-military interactions; and programs such as defense cooperation, nations assistance, security assistance, International Military Education and Training (IMET) programs, and international arms cooperation²².

NATIONS ASSISTANCE.

Nations assistance takes place in Latin America on a continuing basis in the form of bilateral and multilateral exercises, civil-military operations, intelligence and communications sharing and logistical support. Multilateral exercises enhance interoperability and readiness and demonstrate our ability to form and lead effective coalitions. They further demonstrate our

capabilities and resolve to friends and potential adversaries alike. These multilateral exercises provide realistic conditions for working with the technologies, systems, and operations procedures that will be crucial in times of crisis in addition to encouraging burden sharing on the part of regional leaders and allies and facilitate regional integration²³. International exercises also provide geographic familiarity and foster an understanding of the cultures, values, and habits of other societies. In many areas, particularly in the Caribbean Islands, nation assistance is executed primarily in the form of humanitarian and counter drug initiatives. Success in nation assistance programs will be an important factor in determining the stability of regional economies and political systems and will have a direct impact on the U.S. counter narcotics efforts and the scale of illegal migration from Latin America and the Caribbean Islands.

MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO CIVIL AUTHORITIES.

Another major peacetime engagement program is the use of military forces in support of other government agencies, consistent with federal law. Immediate response to humanitarian and disaster relief operations will often have military forces as the first on the scene due to resident transportation and logistical capabilities. Unless DOD fully understands and supports the same goals, working side by side with relief organizations and host nation governments DOD could frustrate the relief efforts and prolong the suffering we are working to alleviate. During disaster relief and humanitarian operations DOD will support the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for domestic situations and the office of foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) for disasters outside the United States²⁴.

SECURITY ASSISTANCE.

The focus of Security Assistance programs is to equip and train foreign defense, police and maritime forces to support counter narcotics, disaster assistance, migrant and peacekeeping operations. With these goals in mind, security assistance is designed to enhance the interoperability of the participating countries; with emphasis toward improving their capabilities to support combined military responses to regional contingencies and disaster relief. Security assistance programs include: Foreign Military Sales (FMS) which provides for the government-to-government sale of U.S. defense equipment; Second, International Military Education and Training (IMET), which provides professional military training to foreign military and civilian personnel; Third, Foreign Military Financing (FMF) is primarily a military financing program. FMF was initially designed to support the security requirements of Middle East countries. FMF currently supports global counter narcotics and demining efforts, while sustaining support to the Middle East countries. Fourth, the Military-to-Military Contact Program

(MMCP) is tailored to encourage cooperative agreements between nations²⁵. The best example of this program is U.S. European Command's Partnership for Peace Program. In Europe, the goal of PFP is to increase European and world stability through increased and shared commitment to respect borders and international law. The PFP program will also help emerging democracies establish shared values and interests, free market economies, civilian control of their armed forces, and commitment to a regional stability and security²⁶. Fifth, voluntary Peacekeeping Operations (VPO) provides voluntary support of multinational peacekeeping operations; Sixth, The Emergency Draw Down Authorities-Grant- (EDA-G) provides assistance for international narcotics control, international disaster relief, or refugee assistance. This program has been used to support U.S. responses to Rwanda, Somalia, Bosnia, and the West Bank/Gaza. Seventh, Excess Defense Articles-Sales (EDA-S) provides for the sale of excess defense articles. This program authorizes a free transfer of excess United States military items to foreign countries.

Peacetime engagement programs contribute to regional stability throughout the western hemisphere and the security of individual participating nations by providing indigenous forces with defense articles, military training, and other defense related services²⁷. For the United States, the net effect is strategic flexibility. But, for all the benefits these programs offer, over the last 10 years U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) has suffered from a significant decline in Security Assistance dollars across all categories. From 1990 to 1999 Security assistance to Latin America has declined 97%²⁸. Virtually all Security Assistance funding to Latin America now supports counter-drug operations. If this trend continues, nations in the Western Hemisphere will remain focused on internal defense, be reluctant to venture outside their borders to join the international community in response to regional crisis, will not possess the training or material capability to participate in coalition operations, find other sources for their security assistance and finally continue to rely on the United States to intervene in times of military or humanitarian crisis.

United States involvement through Security Assistance programs builds and solidifies relationships with new and emerging democracies that are destined to become security partners in the region, while providing a cost-effective alternative to a larger U.S. presence in the region²⁹. These well-equipped and highly trained allies, capable of self-defense or providing military support and leadership, will be in the national interest of the United States.

CONCLUSION

The goal of the United States in the coming century should be to promote regional security in the Western Hemisphere by the encouragement of "Collective Security" alliances under the authority of the OAS and RSS. Using the United States alliances in Europe that exist under NATO as an example, a similar structure for nations in the Western Hemisphere is more than a desirable objective. Although the influence of the United States would be significant, the United States would be relegated to more of an "equal partner" status with other members of the OAS and the RSS. Blatant interventionism in the internal affairs of other nations should be seen a failure of U.S. foreign policy in the future and will probably always produce unforeseen negative consequences.

Unilateral action by the United States as the only remaining superpower is in the long run, certain to be self-defeating and lead to profound global resentment. Further, the longer the United States continues to respond to crisis all over the world, the greater the risk the U.S. military forces will overextend themselves at the expense of readiness and training proficiency thus making the U.S. more vulnerable to potential adversaries.

For the United States, the dilemma is becoming clear. On one hand there is the imperative to maintain war readiness within the armed forces, particularly since more-traditional threats are not likely to dissipate anytime soon. On the other hand, the United States must recognize that transnational threats will increasingly demand more attention and resources from the armed forces. By reducing the likelihood of direct U.S. involvement in unstable regions or potential areas of conflict, the objective of these initiatives would be to achieve hemispheric stability in the future while promoting a collective security environment that would be serviced by hemispheric nations. But that is likely only if nations in this hemisphere perceive transnational issues that are understood as threats to the United States as imminent threats to their own security. Until that recognition occurs, U.S. leaders should prepare to confront the growing transnational security challenges that lie ahead. While formal alliances will continue to exist, coalitions will be key strategic features in the future. They will tend to be more ad hoc in nature where no strong standing alliances exist. Where its interests dictate, the United States will assume the primary leadership role. Other times, it will provide assets and enabling capabilities, for coalition partners' or allies. In most cases the role of the United States will be decisive in any coalition operation and will likely be the underpinning of the coalition itself. The efforts we and our allies invest in helping to defuse regional or local tensions, promoting sustainable economic development, nurturing the rule of law and human rights, or alleviating

human suffering can produce substantial savings by eliminating the need to deploy military forces to the afflicted regions.

The options are clear. Continue to limit peacetime engagement programs such as security assistance to Latin America and other hemispheric countries. In the event of a crisis the United States should then be prepared to unilaterally commit the forces required to resolve the crisis. Leave USSOUTHCOM in place and continue the peacetime engagement programs under the current funding levels. This option would fail to take advantage of the political and economic successes of the last century and further fail to take advantage of Brazil, Argentina, Mexico and Canada as regional hemispheric leaders.

On the other hand the expansion of USSOUTHCOM into America's Command including Mexico and Canada will facilitate collective security initiatives under the control of one Unified Command. A massive increase in all peacetime engagement programs and specifically Security Assistance programs will continue the professional development and modernization of Latin American militaries. The interoperability and collective training gained by these peacetime engagement operations would in turn facilitate collective regional solutions, supported by collective regional forces to future collective regional challenges. Security assistance will empower Western Hemisphere nations to share the overall burden of collective and regional security. Security Assistance could be the tool that, if applied to the long-term goal of providing Latin American military organizations with the capability to participate in hemispheric coalition missions, could make a significant impact on the evolution and stability of democratic institutions in their respective countries. Thus, a proactive peacetime engagement policy encouraging collective security and interoperability, far from being a lesser mission, should be viewed as an essential component of the current United States National Security Strategy. The evolution of a more secure and predictable environment will allow the United States to promote its interests globally without employing military forces as often as we do today.

WORD COUNT = 4504

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⁷ The ideas in this paragraph are based on remarks made by a speaker participating in the U.S. Army War College America's Regional Strategic Assessment Elective.

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